



THE ART OF PERSUASION: USING CENSUS DATA TO INFLUENCE OTHERS

TEACHER VERSION

Subject Level:

Middle School
Social Studies

Grade Level:

8

Approx. Time Required:

120-200 minutes

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to explore data access tools to gather information.
- Students will be able to use census data in an advertisement.
- Students will be able to write arguments supported with census data.

Activity Description

Students will incorporate information from the U.S. Census Bureau's QuickFacts data access tool into an advertisement for a city of their choice. They will use persuasive and advertising techniques to convince others to come to their city.

Suggested Grade Level:

8

Approximate Time Required:120-200 minutes

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to explore data access tools to gather information.
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Topic:

- Persuasive and advertising techniques

Skills Taught:

- Drawing conclusions
 - Using online databases to find information
 - Writing persuasively
-

Materials Required

- The student version of this activity, 4 pages
- A computer with Internet access for each student
- Teacher computer with Internet access and speakers and a projector to display web sites
- Advertisements cut out from a magazine (one for each student)

Activity Item

This activity uses the following online tool:

- QuickFacts
www.census.gov/quickfacts

For more information about QuickFacts and similar resources, read *"Teachers' Guide to Data Access Tools for Students."*

For more information to help you introduce your students to the Census Bureau, read *"Census Bureau 101 for Students."* This information sheet can be printed and passed out to your students as well.

Standards Addressed

See chart below. For more information, read

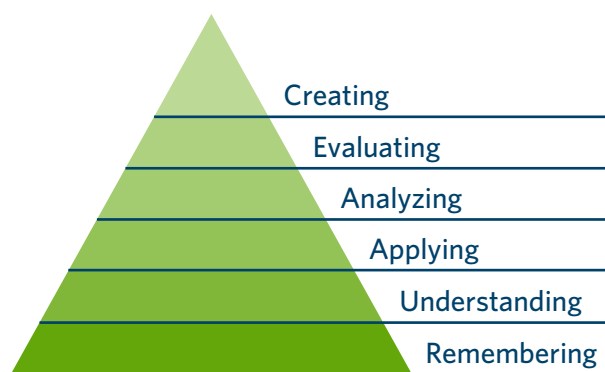
"Overview of Education Standards and Guidelines Addressed in Statistics in Schools Activities."

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Standard	Strand	Cluster
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.	RH 6–8 – History/ Social Studies	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Bloom's Taxonomy

Students will select and **evaluate** data to support a position.



Teacher Notes

Before the Activity

Students must understand the following elements of **persuasive strategies**:

- **Ethos** – appealing to ethics, using the character or credibility of the persuader (e.g., “Doctors all over the world say that pollution affects your health.”)
- **Logos** – appealing to logic (e.g., “The data are clear: 90 percent of people who live in an area with clean air live longer.”)
- **Pathos** – appealing to emotion (e.g., “If you don’t move out of this polluted area soon, you could become sick and die.”)

Students must understand the following **persuasive techniques**:

- **Avant-garde** – an appeal to being ahead of the times (e.g., “Be the first on the block to own this new skateboard.”)
- **Bandwagon** – an appeal to being on the “winning” side (e.g., “Don’t be the only person who doesn’t use CoverGirl.”)
- **Patriotism** – an appeal to love of country (e.g., “This car is made in America, in the heart of Detroit.”)
- **Plain folks** – an appeal to ordinary people (e.g., “People just like you and me eat Domino’s pizza.”)
- **Snob appeal** – using a product or completing an action puts the user in an elite group (e.g., “Trendy people drink coffee from Starbucks.”)
- **Weasel words** – suggesting a positive meaning without a guarantee (e.g., “This toothpaste may prevent cavities.”)

Teachers should check that data are available in QuickFacts for the city or town where their school is located. Cities with populations of 5,000 or fewer people are not included in the tool.

Teachers will pass out magazine advertisements to students, instructing students to work in pairs to first discuss the ads and identify which persuasive strategies and techniques are used, then write an explanation for how those strategies and techniques are used.

Teachers will explain to students that, when they start the activity, they will each create an advertisement persuading people to come to a city of their choice. Teachers should show examples of similar advertisements, such as the “Pure Michigan” ads (tinyurl.com/9djgnto). Teachers will tell students that they will need to support claims made in their advertisements with census data.

Next, teachers should introduce QuickFacts, referring to the Data Tools One-Pager mentioned earlier. Teachers will ask students questions about the purpose of a tool like QuickFacts, such as:

- What are some ways people can use these data? (Teachers should expect answers like: to make decisions about where to live, to determine where resources are needed, to determine where a business should set up a location based on demand.)
- What would happen if the United States didn't gather this kind of information? (Teachers should expect answers like: potential lack of resources and support services in a given location, e.g., we wouldn't know how many buses are needed for schools or how many libraries or community centers are needed in a city.)

Teachers will ask questions to get students thinking about how data could be used, such as:

- Are any of your parents business owners? Do you know what information they used to determine where to open their business and if it would be profitable?
- What are some reasons businesses close?
- Have any of you ever moved to a new city or state? What were some things that you think your parents considered before the move?
- How many of you are interested in leaving town when you graduate from high school? How will you determine where to move next? What factors will you consider?

Teachers will follow steps 1–3 below with students to model the correct way to use QuickFacts and to discuss its capabilities; students should follow along on their computers:

1. Go to www.census.gov/quickfacts on the teacher computer and project the web site on the screen. In the box at the top of the web page that says, "Enter state, city, town, or zip code," enter the city or town where the school is located. Scroll down to show students the different data sets. Point out the "United States" column, which shows national data for easy comparison.
2. Ask students questions about the data (using the most recent data available), calling on volunteers to answer:
 - In which age category do most people in our city/town fall? What about the category for the nation?
 - What are the three largest race categories in our city/town? How about in the nation?
 - What is the median household income for our city/town? Is this higher or lower than that for the nation?
 - Which percentage of people in our city/town who are 25 years or older have a bachelor's degree or higher? How does that percentage compare with that for the nation?
 - What surprises you about these data?
3. Click on the tabs at the top to show students other ways to display the data (map, chart, and dashboard).

After modeling this process, teachers will review the activity's instructions with students.

During the Activity

For question 1, teachers should tell students that they can create their own scenarios for their advertisements based on the data. For example, if the city they chose does not have many women-owned firms, they could create an advertisement designed to convince more businesswomen to move to the area.

For question 2, teachers may choose to tweak the list of options for ad format. If teachers want to focus this activity more on public speaking, for example, they may choose to omit the option of creating a movie trailer. However, if teachers want to emphasize multimedia and visual displays for this activity, they may choose to focus more on the movie trailer option.

Teachers may choose to assign the ad creation portion of the activity as homework if class time runs out.

After the Activity

Teachers will direct students to present their ads to the class.

Extension Idea

- Teachers could have students examine additional advertisements or travel brochures or web sites, asking students to analyze their use of data and persuasive techniques and answer the following questions: Are they effective? Where might census data be applicable?

Student Activity

Click [here](#) to download a printable version for students.

Activity Item

This activity uses the following online tool:

- QuickFacts
www.census.gov/quickfacts

Student Learning Objectives

- I will be able to explore data access tools to gather information.
- I will be able to use census data in an advertisement.
- I will be able to write arguments supported with census data.

For this activity, you must understand these elements of **persuasive strategies**:

- Ethos
- Logos
- Pathos

You must also understand these **persuasive techniques**:

- Avant-garde
- Bandwagon
- Patriotism
- Plain folks
- Snob appeal
- Weasel words

To begin, go to www.census.gov/quickfacts. In the box at the top that says, “Enter state, city, town, or zip code,” type the name of a city that you’d like to research for your advertisement. Be aware that cities with populations of 5,000 or fewer people are not included in the tool.

Think about the travel ads you watched before the activity to guide you in creating your own ad for the city you chose. Your ad should use census data to persuade people to come to your chosen city.

1. First, what is your role? Whom are you trying to persuade in your advertisement? Why are you trying to persuade them? Write your answers in the boxes below.

Here are some options you could use (feel free to come up with your own):

- A real estate agent trying to convince families to move to a city
- The mayor of a city trying to convince business owners to open locations in that city
- A travel agent trying to convince people to visit a city
- A resident of a city trying to convince nonprofits or community organizations to open branches in that city

Who am I?	Whom am I trying to persuade?	Why am I trying to persuade them?
Student answers will vary.	Student answers will vary.	Student answers will vary.

2. What format will you use for your advertisement? (Keep in mind that the audience for your ad should influence the format you select.) Write your answer in the box below.

Here are some options you could use (feel free to come up with your own):

- A travel brochure – This could be appropriate for a travel agent trying to convince tourists to visit a city.
- A TV advertisement or multiple print advertisements – These could be appropriate for a real estate agent trying to convince people to move to the area.
- A documentary movie trailer – This could be used to convince a community that it needs some kind of support service, such as a homeless shelter.
- An opinion piece to be published in a city’s newspaper – This could be appropriate for a resident trying to effect change in the community.

- A persuasive letter – This could be appropriate for a mayor who is trying to convince business owners to come to a city.
- A speech or pitch for a company or community town hall meeting – This could be used to convince people that a service or business is needed in the area.

Which format will I use for my advertisement? Describe the format and why you chose it.

Student answers will vary.

3. Now it's time to collect everything you need to make your advertisement. The ad itself must include:
 - A claim with reasons to support it. For example, "Denver is the best city for college graduates to live in because [reason 1], [reason 2], and [reason 3]."
 - References to at least 10 data points from QuickFacts (for the most recent year available) in at least five different categories. So, for example, not all 10 data points can be related to population.
 - Five different persuasive strategies and/or techniques
4. A document accompanying your ad must include:
 - A reference page of all data points used in your advertisement, listed in the order they appear in the ad
 - A list of every persuasive strategy and technique used in your ad, with a sentence for each explaining why you chose to include it
 - A paragraph explaining the importance of using data to make decisions